Lambda Letters Project

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The Closet Kills

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

In his 1933 inaugural address President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Our country was in the depth of the Great Depression. Roosevelt apparently meant that we should not become so paralyzed with fear that we are unable to do what is necessary to solve the problems faced by the nation.

This year Assemblymember Leno (D–San Francisco) introduced AB 1967, a bill that would allow same-sex couples to obtain marriages in California. In a very real way, the fear of many of us to come out of the closet nearly killed this bill.

Routinely AB 1967 would have been referred to an Assembly policy committee for a hearing and a vote on the merits of the bill. Over 1,200 other bills were introduced in the Assembly this year. Almost all of them were referred to a policy committee without any controversy. However, up until the last possible moment, it appeared that AB 1967 might not be referred. If that happened, the bill would have died without even the courtesy of a hearing on the merits of the bill.

Why did this happen? Apparently legislators were afraid to come anywhere near such a bill, especially during an election year. Many of them were afraid to anger our community by voting against the bill. They were even more afraid of angering the general public by voting for the bill. The best way to avoid these twin perils was to let the bill die without any hearing or vote.

There was reason for their fears. Public opinion polls show that a majority of Americans still disapprove of letting same-sex couples marry. And yet a recent Los Angeles Times poll found the public has become much more supportive of lesbians and gays in other ways. Seven in 10 Americans would not be troubled if their elementary school child had a gay or lesbian teacher. Six in 10 say they are sympathetic to the gay community. Sixty-nine percent of those polled by the Times said they know someone who is lesbian or gay. And the survey found that people who know lesbians or gays are much more likely to be supportive of our community.

Coming out of the closet is a political act. It directly affects the advancement of the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex community. People who know us support our rights. Those of us who lobby at the State Capitol can do a lot. But if a paralyzing fear keeps most of those in our community in the closet, what we can do in Sacramento will always be limited. The general public won't ever know the people of our community. Their fear of us will be slow to change. And the politicians will be slow to support our rights for fear of angering the voters who fear us.

Are you out to your family and friends? Are you out at work or at your house of worship? Each person's situation is different. For some it would be really dangerous to come out of the closet. They should not do so. But a key ingredient of our civil rights movement is for as many of us to come out of the closet as possible. When most of us do that, the public will lose their fear of us and politicians will lose their fear of treating us with respect.

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters and Messages Collected

March, 2004	9,167 letters & e-mails
In all of 2004	51,204 letters & e-mails

Dollars Spent

March, 2004	$3,486
In all of 2004	$12,083

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Mission Statement

To promote the social, economic, and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals, couples, and families; people affected by HIV/AIDS; people of color; and women by urging elected officials to enact and support legislation that accomplishes this goal.

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Staff

Chief Lobbyist, E-mail Alert Advocate: Boyce Hinman,
(916)728-1261, boyce.hinman@lambdaletters.org
Newsletter/Website Editor: stefan.gruenwedel@lambdaletters.org
Legislative Analysts:

- LGBTI Issues: teri.ford@lambdaletters.org
- HIV/AIDS Issues: jamie.shauvin@lambdaletters.org
- People of Color Issues: marty.martinez@lambdaletters.org
- Women's Issues: adrienne.lauby@lambdaletters.org

General Coordinator: aeire.stickney@lambdaletters.org
Volunteer Coordinator: lori.norman@lambdaletters.org

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Send address changes to
Lambda Letters Project, 2528 Madison Avenue, San Diego, CA 92116-2922
or e-mail *aeire.stickney@lambdaletters.org.*

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If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684. In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212.
The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

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Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Issue

Support International Same-Sex Couples

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

With more and more people traveling overseas, it becomes inevitable that some meet and fall in love with citizens of other countries. Long-distance romances are hard to maintain.

For heterosexual couples there is an easy solution: A US citizen can marry his or her foreign partner. US law grants that partner legal permanent residence in this country. However, the law does not allow American citizens to do this for their same-sex partners.

Senator Patrick Leahy (D–VT) has introduced S 1510 in the US Senate. Called the Permanent Partners Immigration Act, the purpose of the bill is to allow US citizens to obtain permanent residency for their domestic partners who are currently citizens of another nation.

Adam Francoeur, program director of the Lesbian and Gay Immigration Rights Task Force based in New York, estimated an initial surge of up to 20,000 people would seek residency visas if S 1510 became law. He thought the number of applicants then would drop to about 1,000 a year.

S 1510 was referred to the Immigration Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee on July 31, 2003. It has been there ever since.

Assemblymember Sally Lieber (D–San Jose) has introduced Assembly Joint Resolution (AJR) 60, which urges Congress to pass the Permanent Partners Immigration Act. We expect AJR 60 to arrive on the Assembly floor in May.

Please write to your Assemblymember and urge him or her to vote for this important bill.

What happens when women put pen to paper... brush to canvas... lens to scene?

Sparks

spark — n. 1. A fiery particle resulting from friction. 2. A flash of light. 3. A trace or suggestion. 4. A vital, animating or activating force.

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HIV/AIDS Issue

Support Clean Needle Exchange Programs

By Jamie E. Shauvin, Legislative Analyst

According to the Department of Health Services, California now spends over $315 million each year on services to people with HIV/AIDS.

As of December 2002, there were 123,819 cumulative cases of HIV and AIDS reported in California since the outbreak of the epidemic.

The Department of Health Services also reports that just shy of 20 percent of all cases of HIV infection are related to the sharing of dirty needles by intravenous drug users.

Reducing the sharing of dirty needles significantly could have a huge impact on the spread of HIV/AIDS. A reduction in sharing dirty needles would probably do much to lower the state's cost of treating the disease.

Existing law requires a person to establish his or her identity properly in order to purchase a needle or syringe and for pharmacists to keep detailed records of nonprescription sales of hypodermic needles and syringes.

To change this situation, SB 1159 would authorize the sale or furnishing of hypodermic needles or syringes to a person for human use without a prescription if the person is known to the furnisher and has previously provided a prescription or other proof of legitimate medical need.

SB 1159 would eliminate the requirement that pharmacists keep detailed records of such sales. The bill would also authorize a person to possess 10 or fewer hypodermic needles or syringes if acquired through an authorized source.

Introduced by California State Senator John Vasconcellos (D–San Jose), SB 1159 was successfully passed by the California Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality for a vote on April 19.

Assuming that this committee also passes this bill, we need you to contact your state senators and ask for their support when the bill comes up for a vote.

SB 1159 could do a lot to slow the spread of serious blood-borne diseases. That, in turn, could greatly reduce the current projected health services costs to the state of caring for people with these diseases.

Please write to your state senator, urging him or her to approve SB 1159.

Women's Issue

Help Victims of Domestic Violence Seek Justice

By Kathleen Watanabe, Legislative Analyst

Domestic violence has been a serious, pervasive problem in this country. During the past decade, women's and domestic violence advocacy groups have made many inroads in assisting domestic violence victims, who are primarily women. They have succeeded in getting programs and new laws implemented that would protect victims, punish perpetrators, and educate the public. However, one area that is quite often forgotten or misunderstood is the situation where persistent battering has driven a victim to commit a serious crime.

From 1992 to the present, both legislation and case law in California have addressed issues of battering and its effects on victims. In 1992, Evidence Code section 1107 was added to allow expert testimony on battered women's syndrome in a criminal action. In 2001, the legislature passed SB 799, which expanded the law to allow imprisoned victims of domestic violence—convicted prior to 1992 of homicide for killing their abusive partners—an opportunity to seek a retrial or reduction of their sentence. It enabled them to bring writs of habeas corpus based on the premise that had evidence of battering and its effects been admitted at trial, it would have changed the outcome of their cases.

The current laws still have many shortcomings, however. Senator John Burton (D–San Francisco) has now introduced SB 1385, which would correct weaknesses in the law. Current law excludes people convicted of offenses occurring between 1992 and August 29, 1996. Why these dates? On that date in 1996 the California Supreme Court decided the case of People *v.* Humphrey. They ruled that evidence of battered women's syndrome may be introduced so that a jury can understand the circumstances in which the defendant found herself at the time she killed her abuser and judge the reasonableness of her belief that the killing was necessary. As a result, however, those who were convicted of offenses occurring between 1992, when Evidence Code section 1107 was first added, and August 29, 1996, when the Court decided People *v.* Humphrey, were left out of the benefit of that decision. SB 1385 would correct the law to include these overlooked victims.

Current law only applies to a narrow class of convicted survivors. It applies to those convicted of homicide of their abusers. It does not apply to those persons convicted of other crimes, even if those crimes were related directly to their experience of being battered. An example would be a battered victim who was coerced by her abuser to commit a crime. SB 1385 would expand the law to include these instances.

Current law has a sunset date of January 1, 2010, in which the writs of habeas corpus could be brought for cases prior to 1992. SB 1385 would remove that sunset date.

Finally, SB 1385 would amend the current terminology of "battered women's syndrome" to "battering and its effects." The term "battered women's syndrome" perpetuates negative stereotypes that harm the victims of battering. It implies that an abused person must be a woman, that she must be suffering from a syndrome or disease that is curable, and that there is only one authentic version of how she is supposed to respond to the battering. In reality, victims can be men, and battering and its effects can have varying physical, emotional, economic, psychological, and social consequences. Since the mid-1990s, "battering and its effects" has become the standard term used by the legal and domestic violence communities.

Please write to members of the Assembly Public Safety Committee and urge them to approve SB 1385.

People of Color Issue

Expand Access to Life-Saving Drugs for Uninsured

By Marty Martinez, Legislative Analyst

Even with recent federal legislation creating a prescription drug benefit for seniors, 52 million Americans lack access to drugs that are necessary to ensure their health. For these uninsured populations, the lack of access to affordable prescription drugs continues to impact their healthcare.

As the backbone of California's healthcare safety net, primary care clinics see largely low-income and uninsured populations. These patients are in need of comprehensive and affordable healthcare, including access to affordable drugs. Often clinics provide patients with pharmaceuticals but their resources to do so are limited because they are usually not reimbursed by the government or any other entity.

SB 1563 by Martha Escutia (D–Norwalk) will continue to enable clinics to provide affordable prescription drugs for their patients. With drug prices comprising an increasing portion of clinics' budgets, it is important that these "open door" providers have access to affordable drugs. This bill stipulates that before drug sellers enter into a contract with state or local governments, they must commit to offering to sell medications to clinics that care for the poor at prices that do not exceed the discounted price specified under federal law, with regard to certain drugs.

The bill would also require the wholesaler or manufacturer to disclose a list of prices to those clinics upon request. All of this could do much to help these clinics serve the poor. Please write to your senator in support of SB 1563.

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May Legislative Update

Each bill introduced in the state legislature must be reviewed by a policy committee in each house before the full Assembly and Senate can vote on them.

The Assembly Health Committee is one such example of a policy committee. The job of the policy committee is to decide if the bill makes sense from a policy standpoint.

Any bill expected to cost the state or local governments $100,000 or more per year must also be voted on by the Appropriations Committee of each house before the full house can vote on it. A bill costing that much is called a "fiscal bill."

There are deadlines for getting through the policy committees. All fiscal bills must be approved by the policy committee of the house in which they were introduced by no later than April 23.

Non-fiscal bills must be approved by the policy committee of the house in which they were introduced by no later than May 7. Then all fiscal bills must be approved by the Appropriations Committee in the bill's house of origin no later than May 21.

The purpose of these deadlines is to ensure that bills move forward in time to be passed before the legislature closes for the year. Any bill missing these deadlines dies. No further action is permitted on the bill unless its author gets a waiver of the rules.

HIV/AIDS Issues

AB 1925 (Ray Haynes, R–Temecula)
Purpose: To require advance notice to parents, under certain circumstances, of sex or AIDS education to be given in a school and to notify parents that they can remove their children from this education by submitting a written request.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Education Committee. Sent to the Assembly floor for a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Oppose.

AB 1957 (Dario Frommer, D–Glendale)
Purpose: To require the state to establish a Web site to display price comparisons of prescription drugs, including prices charged by licensed pharmacies in the state and Canadian pharmacies that provide mail-order service to the US that meet certification requirements established under the bill.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Referred to the Assembly Business and Professions Committee for a hearing on April 20.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2125 (Lloyd Levine, D–Van Nuys)
Purpose: To require that a diagnosis be written on any prescription written by a doctor or on any prescription medicine container unless the patient asks that it not be added.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee for a vote on April 20.
LLP Position: Watch with concern. This measure could help senior citizens who may forget what a medicine is intended for but it may cause problems for people with socially unacceptable diseases as well.

AB 2871 (Patty Berg, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To make it easier for cities and counties to establish clean needle and syringe exchange programs.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee. On the Assembly floor awaiting a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support.

AJR 61 (Mark Ridley-Thomas, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To urge the US Secretary of Health and Human Services to certify that permitting the importation of prescription drugs from Canada into the US poses no additional risk to the public's health and safety and, in fact, results in a significant reduction in the cost of prescription drugs to the American consumer.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. On the Assembly floor awaiting a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1149 (Deborah Ortiz, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To require the state to develop and disseminate information identifying pharmacies in Canada that meet recognized standards for the safe dispensing of dangerous drugs (prescriptions) to California residents. Also must publicize foreign suppliers that do not meet standards. Information should be posted on the Internet.
Status: Approved by the Senate Business and Professions Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1159 (John Vasconcellos, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To authorize a licensed pharmacist to sell hypodermic needles or syringes to a person without a prescription under specified conditions, and to authorize a person to possess up to 10 hypodermic needles or syringes if acquired through an authorized source.
Status: Passed by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Referred to the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality for a vote on April 19
LLP Position: Support. This would facilitate authorized clean-needle exchange programs around the state.

SB 1494 (John Vasconcellos, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To provide that a qualified person with a medical marijuana identification card, or any designated primary caregiver, may possess any amount of marijuana consistent with the medical needs of that qualified person with an identification card.
Status: Approved by the Senate. Sent to the Assembly. Not referred to a committee yet.
LLP Position: Support.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/ Transgender/Intersex Issues

AB 1918 (Cindy Montanez, D–Mission Hills)
Purpose: To allow a school employee, in a school district that is not subject to disability compensation laws, to take up to six weeks off with partial pay to care for a seriously ill child, spouse, parent, or domestic partner, or to bond with a new child.
Status: Referred to the Assembly PERS Committee for a vote on May 5.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1967 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow same-sex couples to obtain marriage licenses in California.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2044 (Bonnie Garcia, R–El Centro)
Purpose: To allow a credit for the amount paid or incurred by a taxpayer for long-term care or long-term care insurance for any family member of the taxpayer.

Continued on page 6

Legislative Update

Continued from page 5

Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support if domestic partners are included in the definition of family.

AB 2208 (Christine Kehoe, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To require that domestic partners be treated equally to married couples by insurance companies with regard to benefits under all kinds of insurance policies.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee for a vote on April 20.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2322 (Patricia Bates, R–Laguna Niguel)
Purpose: To authorize any worker to opt out of making contributions to, and receiving benefits from, the family temporary disability insurance program. This program provides six weeks of disability payments to workers who stay home to care for seriously ill family members, including domestic partners.
Status: Failed in the Assembly Insurance Committee. Reconsideration granted.
LLP Position: Oppose. Allowing employees to opt out might bankrupt the program.

AB 2889 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To make employers responsible for the acts of nonemployees with respect to all forms of harassment (including harassment based on the LGBTI or HIV status of employees) in the workplace where the employer or its agents or supervisors knew, or should have known, of the conduct and failed to take immediate and appropriate corrective action.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee for a hearing on April 21.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2900 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To amend nondiscrimination language in California's labor and employment codes to make the language uniform. The nondiscrimination language found in the Fair Employment and Housing Act will be used as the model. Sexual orientation, gender identity, and language protecting women and other minorities will be amended into many of these government codes.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee for a vote on April 21.
LLP Position: Support.

AJR 60 (Sally Lieber, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To approve an Assembly Joint Resolution urging Congress and President Bush to support the Permanent Partners Immigration Act. This act, now being considered in Congress, would allow US citizens to obtain permanent legal US residency for their domestic partners who are citizens of another country.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support. Currently straight couples can obtain the same result by marriage.

SB 1193 (Nell Soto, D–Ontario)
Purpose: To require the state to pay a $10,000 death benefit to the surviving spouse, or beneficiary designated by the service member, of any member of the California National Guard, State Military Reserve, or Naval Militia who dies or is killed in the performance of their duty. This would also provide that the surviving spouse and children of the deceased member shall qualify for benefits under the National Guard Assumption Program of Loans for Education, and would exempt the spouse and children from paying tuition and fees at any public postsecondary educational institution in this state.
Status: Approved by the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing on April 26.
LLP Position: Support if bill is amended to allow the service member to designate any beneficiary of the death benefit.

SB 1234 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To enact a uniform definition of "hate crime" and direct all state and local agencies to use it exclusively; encourage all law-enforcement agencies to adopt a formal hate-crime protocol; direct law-enforcement agencies to deliver expanded hate crimes training to their officers; and increase penalties for hate crimes.
Status: Referred to the Senate Public Safety Committee for a vote on April 20.
LLP Position: Support.

People of Color Issues

AB 292 (Leland Yee, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To provide that a state or local governmental agency, or a public or private agency supported by state funding, shall not use any child, or permit any child to be used, as a translator or interpreter in any matter involving the business or function of that agency, except as specified. This would require each agency that receives state funding to have available for inspection an established procedure for providing competent translation services.
Status: Currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 858 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To prohibit public schools from using the word "Redskins" as a school or athletic team name, mascot, or nickname.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Referred to Senate Education Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

STUDIO C
crystal weber ▪ studio.c@sbcglobal.net
tel 916.448.6003 ▪ fax 916.446.6474
3181 d street ▪ sacramento, ca 95816

CAPITAL GRAPHICS INC.
Stuart Eldridge
2920 36th Street
Sacramento, California 95817
www.capgraph.com
Tel: (916) 455-2777
Fax: (916) 455-4111
Toll Free: (877) 453-6003
SEldridge@capgraph.com

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AB 1796 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To provide that a convicted drug felon shall be eligible for aid under the Food Stamp Program.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee. On the Assembly floor awaiting a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1815 (Wilma Chan, D–Oakland)
Purpose: To raise the income tax rate and the alternate minimum income tax rate on California's wealthiest citizens.
Status: Referred to Assembly Revenue and Tax Committee's suspense file. Scheduled for a vote on May 10.
LLP Position: Support. This would reduce the pressure to make cuts to vital HIV/AIDS programs and other health and social service programs.

AB 1895 (Joe Nation, D–San Rafael)
Purpose: To require that an attorney who specializes in immigration law, or a certified immigration specialist, be provided to a dependent child of the court who is not a citizen of the US and when the court has decided parental reunification is not an option.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a vote on April 21.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1963 (Simon Salinas, D–Salinas)
Purpose: To encourage the use of *promotores de salud* and community health workers to provide better health outcomes for rural and underserved communities, particularly agricultural workers, and seek to incorporate the use of *promotores de salud* and community health workers in the full range of state-funded health programs. (*Promotores de salud* are programs that utilize trained community members to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate outreach, education, and access to services.)
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a hearing on April 21.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2221 (John Campbell, R–Irvine)
Purpose: To overturn current law which requires that certain consumer contracts, which were negotiated in Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, or Korean, be provided in written form in that language to the customer before the contract is signed.

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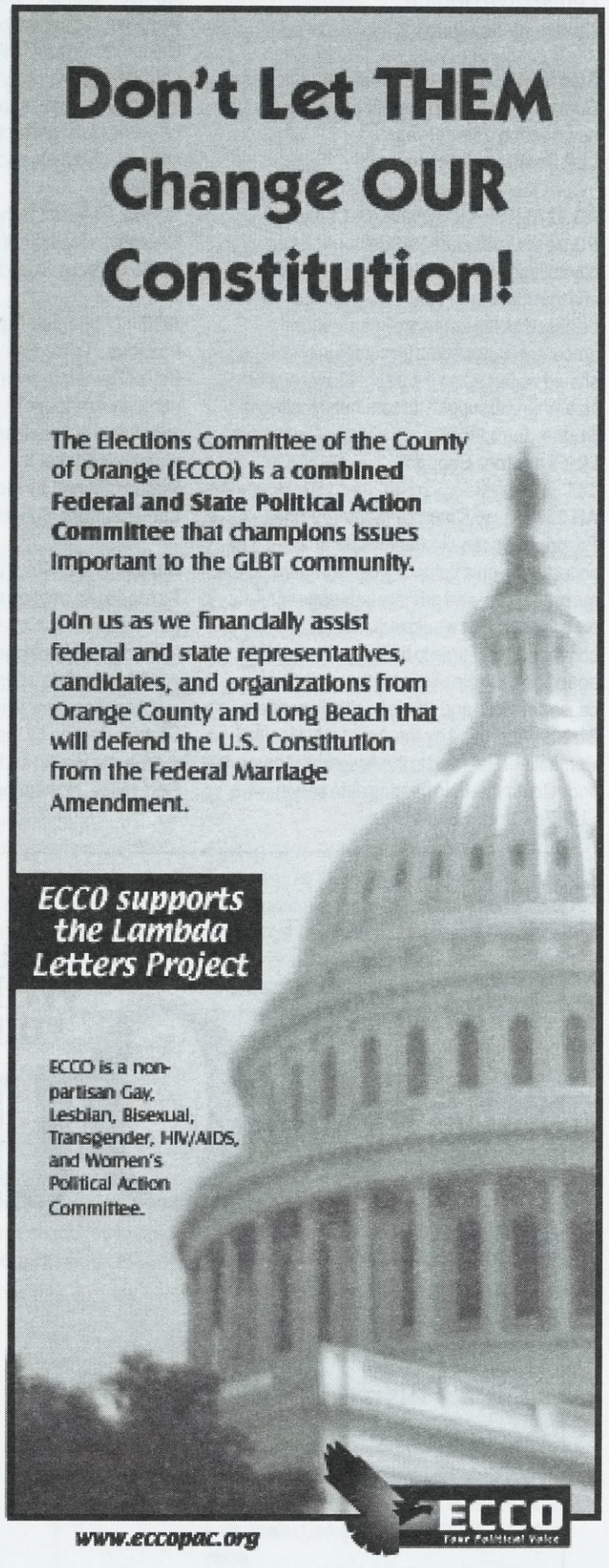
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Join us as we financially assist federal and state representatives, candidates, and organizations from Orange County and Long Beach that will defend the U.S. Constitution from the Federal Marriage Amendment.
ECCO supports the Lambda Letters Project
ECCO is a non-partisan Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, HIV/AIDS, and Women's Political Action Committee.
www.eccopac.org
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Your Political Voice

Legislative Update

Continued from page 7

Status: Referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Hearing cancelled by the author. No new hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Oppose.

AB 2278 (Mervyn Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To declare that California's community colleges don't get enough financial support and that funding for community colleges should be based on full-time enrollment, while the amount of state funding for community colleges should be based on the national average of state financial support for community colleges.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2324 (Judy Chan, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To require many state programs to collect data, on a voluntary basis, regarding the race, ethnicity, and primary language of all participants. This would require the state to convene a task force to find ways that state agencies can help eliminate the underlying causes of racial and ethnic health disparities.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2387 (Marco Firebaugh, D–South Gate)
Purpose: To authorize the University of California and the California State University to consider culture, race, ethnicity, national origin, geographic origin, and household income, along with other relevant factors, in undergraduate and graduate admissions under certain limited conditions.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Higher Education Committee for a vote on April 20.
LLP Position: Support.

ACR 172 (George Nakano, D–Torrance)
Purpose: To declare February 19, 2004, as a Day of Remembrance in order to increase public awareness of the events surrounding the internment of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AJR 54 (Robert Pacheco, R–City of Industry)
Purpose: To petition Congress to revise the formula used to calculate the federal Medicaid assistance percentage (FMAP) to consider, in addition to a state's per-capita income, the total number of persons living in poverty in that state.
Status: Passed by the Assembly. Referred to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support. This bill would provide more federal money for the Medi-Cal program and reduce the need for enrollment caps or budget cuts to the program.

AJR 62 (Ridley Thomas, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To ask Congress to repeal a law that prohibits the federal government from bargaining over drug prices for Medicare prescription drugs.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. On the Assembly floor awaiting a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support.

AJR 64 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To condemn hate crimes against Arab-Americans, Muslim-Americans, South Asian-Americans, Sikh-Americans, and other Americans and to urge police to prevent these crimes and to vigorously investigate and prosecute them.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Awaiting assignment to a Senate Committee.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 17 (Martha Escutia, D–Norwalk)
Purpose: To amend the laws relating to property taxes on nonresidential commercial and industrial property to eliminate loopholes that

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have allowed such properties to evade reassessment upon sale of the property.
Status: In the Assembly inactive file.
LLP Position: Support. This bill would increase tax revenues and reduce the need to cut spending on health and social services programs.

SB 921 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To declare the intent of the legislature to implement a single-payer, universal health-care delivery system in California.
Status: Currently in the Assembly Health Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1144 (John Burton, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow the state to buy drugs from Canadian manufacturers, among others. Would require the state to seek federal permission to buy drugs in Canada.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing on April 19.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1160 (Gilbert Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow undocumented immigrants, under certain circumstances, to obtain driver's licenses. Details of the bill wording are still being worked out.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1170 (Deborah Ortiz, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To require the state to establish (on or before January 1, 2005) a list of maximum allowable costs that drug providers could charge the state for medicines used in the Medi-Cal program.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on April 19.
LLP Position: Support. The list would keep costs down and reduce pressure to limit enrollment in Medi-Cal.

SB 1188 (Wesley Chesbro, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To provide grants to local governments that issue building permits for low-cost housing developments for farm workers.
Status: Referred to the Senate Housing and Community Development Committee for a vote on April 19.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1333 (Don Perata, D–Oakland)
Purpose: To authorize the state to reimburse a pharmacy that provides to a Medi-Cal beneficiary, or an AIDS Drug Assistance (ADAP) patient, a prescription drug that was purchased from a Canadian pharmacy.
Status: Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on April 19.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1354 (Martha Escutia, D–Norwalk)
Purpose: To eliminate excessive tax credits being claimed by corporations in California to help solve the state's budget deficit without cutting vital services.
Status: Referred to the Senate Revenue and Tax Committee for a vote on April 14. Vote cancelled for lack of a quorum. No new hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1452 (Liz Figueroa, D–Fremont)
Purpose: To prohibit the state from contracting with any individual or entity that employs persons or subcontractors outside the US.
Status: Referred to the Senate Governmental Organization Committee for a vote on April 20.
LLP Position: Oppose unless contracts for medicines are exempted. This might prevent the state from cutting costs by buying medicines from Canada. That, in turn, might hurt public health programs.

SB 1499 (Kevin Murray, D–Culver City)
Purpose: To prohibit an employer from charging a fee for cashing an employee's payroll check, transporting an employee to a job site, or renting an employee the tools necessary to perform the duties of the employment.
Status: Approved by the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1503 (Tom McClintock, R–Thousand Oaks)
Purpose: To overturn current law that allows certain undocumented young people to pay lower in-state tuition rates at the California Community Colleges and the California State University. Lambda Letters fought hard to gain passage of that current law two years ago.
Status: Failed in the Senate Education Committee.
LLP Position: Oppose.

SB 1714 (Joe Dunn, D–Garden Grove)
Purpose: To provide civil damages to any California resident who was a victim of coerced repatriation to Mexico between 1929 and 1944. This benefit extends to any heir or beneficiary of a victim of coerced repatriation. Suit could be brought against the state of California or any local government, private party, or business which enforced the repatriation.
Status: Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SJR 21 (Joe Dunn, D–Garden Grove)
Purpose: To ask Congress to establish a fact-finding commission to determine if the federal government mistreated American citizens and permanent resident aliens of Mexican descent who were deported or coerced to emigrate during the 1930s and to recommend appropriate remedies.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support.

Women's Issues

AB 1813 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To provide increased penalties for people convicted of committing domestic violence in the presence of a child.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Public Safety Committee for a vote on April 13. Hearing cancelled at author's request.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1825 (Sarah Reyes, D–Fresno)
Purpose: To require larger employers to train supervisors on the subject of remedies for, and laws against, sexual harassment in the work-place.

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Legislative Update

Continued from page 9

Status: Referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee for a vote on April 20.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2010 (Loni Hancock, D–Berkeley)
Purpose: To allow Alameda and Solano Counties to increase fees, up to a maximum increase of $2, for certified copies of marriage certificates, birth certificates, fetal death records, and death records, for the purposes of providing funding for governmental oversight and for the coordination of domestic violence prevention, intervention, and prosecution efforts in the county.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee. On the Assembly floor awaiting a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2018 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To provide that, in a divorce case in which one party has been convicted of criminal domestic violence in the last five years, the other party has a rebuttable presumption of entitlement to 100 percent of the community property.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2148 (Manny Diaz, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To allow a court to require parties to a child custody, visitation, and child-support proceedings to pay attorney's fees and court costs. This would allow the court to order one party to pay the other party's costs when the other party cannot afford them; would allow the court to issue a temporary order on child custody, visitation, and child support while the case is being litigated; and would allow the court to order spousal support, if the parties are married, during litigation of a domestic abuse case.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee for a vote on April 20.
LLP Position: Support.

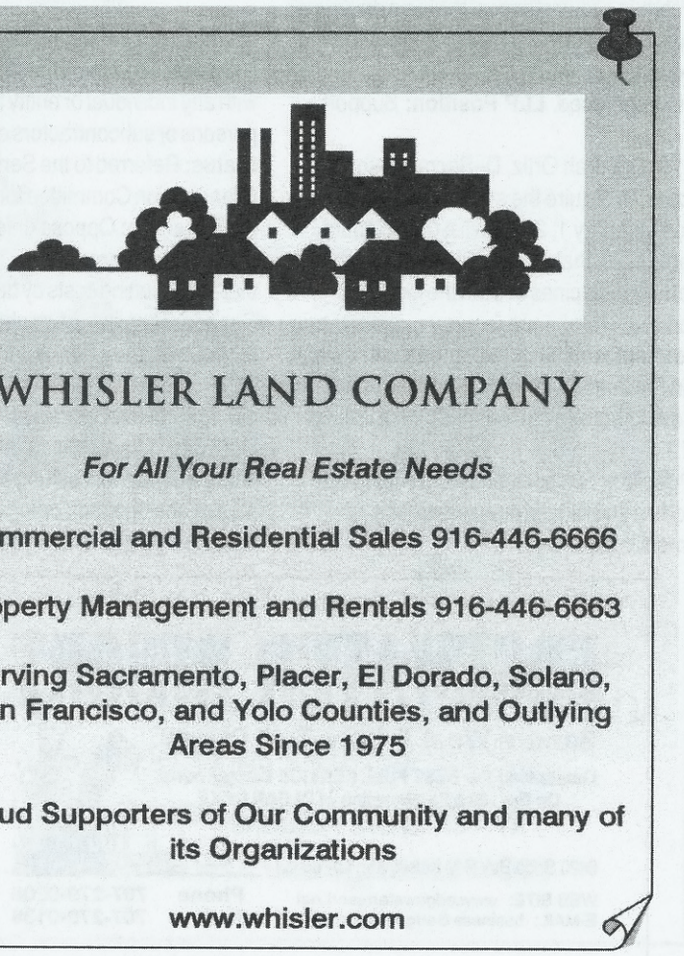
AB 2291 (Ray Haynes, R–Temecula)
Purpose: To prohibit the funding of an abortion under the Medi-Cal program unless the physician performing the abortion has obtained written assurance from the patient that she understands that she may not be coerced into having an abortion. The bill would prohibit the reimbursement of a provider for abortion services unless the provider submits a statement signed by the recipient of the Medi-Cal benefits that includes a statement that it is against the law for anyone to force, intimidate, or coerce the recipient into having an abortion.
Status: Defeated in the Assembly Health Committee.
LLP Position: Oppose.

AB 2317 (Jenny Oropeza, D–Carson)
Purpose: To increase the penalty for employers who pay women less for doing the same work as men.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a vote on April 21.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2662 (Hannah-Beth Jackson, D–Santa Barbara)
Purpose: To require the governor and the legislature to implement the principles underlying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by addressing discrimination against women and girls, and to require the governor to evaluate state agencies and departments to ensure that the state does not discriminate against women through the allocation of funding and the delivery of services.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AJR 57 (Hanna-Beth Jackson, D–Santa Barbara)
Purpose: To petition Congress to uphold the US Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade and to encourage all Americans to participate in the national celebration of "The March for Women's Lives."
Status: Approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee. On the Senate floor awaiting a final vote in that house. Must go back to the Assembly for concurrence with changes made in the Senate.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1441 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To provide that a victim of domestic violence or abuse has the right to have a domestic violence counselor and a support person of his or her choosing present at any interview by law enforcement authorities, district attorneys, or defense attorneys.
Status: Approved by the Senate Public Safety Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing on April 19.
LLP Position: Support.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